

## Artsnewydd Check-In Zoom Meeting

MINUTES

Tuesday 30th June

11:00 - 12:45

Attendees:     Alan Dear                             Amanda Harris  
                     Emma Newrick                             John Briggs  
                     Justin Teddy Cliffe                             Kate Mercer  
                     Natasha Baker                             Rhian Hutchings

Apologies:     Andrea Carney                             David Daniel

Promoted on: Email / Facebook / Instagram / Twitter

Update from John Briggs:

- Sharing on behalf of John Briggs & [Cwtsh](#) ^ POST added to Facebook group for Newport CAN - **Please share with your networks:**

Cwtsh is proud to announce its partnership with Cardiff and the Vale College to Present 'Solidarity' - a virtual Foundation Degree Photography Show.

This project is a collaborative effort between three student photographers, Beth Alderton, Martyn Wild & Robin Gough. Unable to attend classes because of the current coronavirus pandemic, they have been working in isolation for many weeks. The project explores their hopes and motivations towards building a better world than the one before it and how, through solidarity, we can all work together even when kept apart.

This virtual photographic gallery will launch on the 2nd of July at [geni.us/solidarity](https://www.geni.us/solidarity)  
Exhibition access is via Youtube Livestream Link: <https://youtu.be/qI3LMzt-FRM>

Updates from CWTSH:

- **Currently anticipate being shut until 2021 to observe social distancing rules.**
- Biggest asset as a micro venue has now become their greatest limitation re: classes / workshops / exhibitions / activities etc.
- Programme will shift to being online for the fore-seeable.
- Opportunity for repair and renovation of space whilst lockdown is in effect.
- Confirmed exhibitions by artists Greta Hart and Paul Langley now post-poned to 2021 at artist request - prefer to have exhibitions where audiences can attend and people can come together.
- **CHILDREN'S LIBRARY TO REOPEN IN NEAR FUTURE** - by appointment? 1 or 2 children at a time. Details announced soon.
- Poster exhibition of Cwtsh events planned to go up on walls to fill space.
- Suggestion for rotating window display to happen to utilise space - ie digital notice board / TV screen / slideshow of work etc

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- **Run by volunteers - difficult for volunteers to come together as many are vulnerable to COVID-19** although they are able to meet and come together on Zoom. Could do with support to skill share / put programmes online / be able to open up the art centre.

Update from Justin Teddy Cliffe:

- Has been working in partnership with Fez Miah on Sofa Share Wales > <https://www.facebook.com/sofasharewales/> < during lockdown
- Working on the idea of pluralism in art (i.e coexistence of different interests, convictions, and lifestyles) and how this can be developed to support and promote others.
- **Offering help and support to others (individuals / businesses / orgs) to explore and continue delivering events / activities / performances in line with Government COVID-19 guidelines.**
- Important that this time is seen as an opportunity rather than a threat, to develop and adapt rather than fail to move forward, to work together and overcome (i.e. collaboration not competition).

Rhian Hutchings shared this model based on Manchester:

<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/news/cultural-sector-in-greater-manchester-com-es-together-to-help-young-people/?fbclid=IwAR1tgSIN3-kRJ1hf34vqU1EezAIBDy9M6C3-jztYKt5q93e3gX6QZ2toyDo>

Update from Alan Dear % The Riverfront:

- Confirmation that the Riverfront is currently closed and staff are furloughed.  
**Currently anticipate being shut to members of the public until Easter 2021 to conform / adapt building in accordance with social distancing rules.**
- Theatres across the UK are largely all in precarious positions with many in danger of shutting.
- Autumn programme is in place however awaiting confirmation if will go ahead - Position still unclear in terms of how to proceed with current legislation. Waiting for updated guidance from UK GOV / Senedd Cymru / ACW.
- The Riverfront's position is that it costs more to do things at the Riverfront (i.e. building, staff etc) therefore it costs more if things go wrong... for example, opening too soon, tickets fail to sell, consequences of 2nd wave etc.
- Priority is that the Riverfront DOES open, and stays alive, able to offer employment as well as entertainment in the future... PRESERVE & PROTECT
- Funding in place to open up opportunities for producers and community groups to produce and broadcast content to wider audiences for commercial output - more details tbc soon with launch of scheme.
- Acknowledgement that connection with community base is key for audience support / survival.

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- Project underway to set up a lounge in foyer of The Riverfront allowing socially-distant size-limited audience pop-up performances to take place - expected Easter 2021.

**QUESTION RAISED re: FREELANCERS IN NEWPORT**

Do we know how many freelancers in the creative industries are affected by COVID restrictions (loss of work / shielding / vulnerable groups) in Newport?

What about volunteer groups? How is volunteering affected by COVID restrictions (loss of work / shielding / vulnerable groups) in Newport?

AP - Alan Dear to ask Maggie Dunning @ ACW for more information on this.

Update from Rhian Hutchings % Operasonic:

We're looking for community singers to take part - **please spread the word...**  
COME AND HELP US MAKE AN ONLINE VIRTUAL MUSICAL - SEND US YOUR VERSION OF 7 AMAZING SONGS WRITTEN BY PUPILS FROM LLISWERRY HIGH SCHOOL FROM COMMUNITY MEMORIES OF THE LYSAGHT INSTITUTE.

More here on how to get involved. <https://www.operasonic.co.uk/lysaght-musical/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/733552767448125/>

Update from Amanda Harris:

- A photographer based between Abergavenny and Monmouth. First time attendee to Newport CAN as meetings usually conflict with work commitments - **Zoom has allowed her to join in and connect.**
- Projects suspended during COVID-19 including another exhibition in development with Cwtsh and social distancing restrictions.
- Rurally based - increased barriers for participation and accessing resources for dispersed regional audiences outside of urban Newport area. City problems are now affecting rural spaces.
- **Highlighted need to connect with and extend networks to rural venues and cultural organisations**, especially as these independent spaces may be more financially precarious but isolated from support networks with current social distancing guidelines in place (like Cwtsh). Purpose is to skill share / share fundraising knowledge and funding opportunities / resources / promotional tools etc.

Rhian Hutchings signposted to these organisations as community connectors in rural communities which share a communication structure to support the group:

The Stove <https://thestove.org/>

Peak Cymru <https://peak.cymru/>

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Update from Emma Newrick - NCC Museum & Heritage:

- Reflection across heritage sites in Newport on how to increase audience engagement with collections in the city has been an ongoing issue which has now come to a head as a result of COVID-19.
- Conclusion is now that **DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT IS KEY** to reach and sustain current audience interest and keep collections as an accessible educational resource.
- Currently bidding for money to develop digital learning resources suitable for schools, community groups etc, particularly those unable to make trips to see the collection in person (especially those who are COVID-19 vulnerable).
- Signposted to ART FUND - grants to help museums, galleries and cultural organisations respond to the immediate challenges posed by the Covid-19 crisis:  
<https://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/funding-grants-for-museums>

Rhian Hutchings signposted to Operasonic's VEHICLES learning resources available currently under development for schools in time for Summer Holidays (watch here):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkxWUDKxMYg&list=PL3qTgBDqumc-6psxdCEMynYqZLKfPrrYF>

General discussion then on the need to be proactive during COVID-19 to ensure the survival and sustainability of cultural economy in Newport.

OUTCOMES:

ONLINE PLATFORMS ARE KEY

- People want to engage but will only do so in ways that feel safe and are comfortable with... how do we adapt to this?
- Preservation is possible if we maintain contact with our audiences, keep them involved and allow them to participate and invest themselves in community resources.
- Need to support each other and be generous with our resources and information for the benefit of our community - fundraising, training, volunteer support etc

REGULAR ZOOM MEET-UPS

- For health and well being (to keep in contact with others, routine, isolation, community etc).
- Reduce isolation and reduce barriers to participation with arts in Newport across age groups.

PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED AS GROUP GOING FORWARD

- How we engage with others is key.
- How we make ourselves visible is key.
- Must act and move faster. To achieve change it'd do or do not.

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- Also, we must have information about money, budgets and funding available to us as much in advance as possible so that organisers / administrators can plan, feedback and develop effectively and in good time to be as successful and worthwhile as possible. This will improve the legacies and impact of all projects going forward.
- Think about summer activities for young audiences - summer break starts in 3 weeks \*BUT ALSO\* these groups are no longer able to share cultural experiences via school curriculum... How do we reach our youngest audience and community members in Newport over the summer?

**QUESTION - How do we encourage and nurture community ownership and activism to protect and fight for the arts in Newport and our region?**

**SHORT TERM** - support available seems to be in business focused... Therefore do we as a community need to make a business case to demonstrate the link between arts, culture and tourism?

- How do we raise the profile of arts with decision makers of Newport / Cardiff / Wales?
- How do we get them to increase / improve support for the arts as an industry / in our region?

**LONG TERM** - We need an advocate on behalf of the arts to liaise with and lobby the wealth holders and decision makers in key roles but that also can offer guidance and enable development for the arts within Newport. Can we develop an impartial and autonomous enterprise in Newport that is **independent** but able to support all individuals, businesses, organisations and initiatives?